

Crossing boundaries in search of technology today



Personnel with the U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command's International Technology Center scan the globe for technologies, such as the new M777 Howitzer, currently available in overseas markets that can benefit and enhance Army capabilities.

Larry D. McCaskill

RDECOM

It's an old adage and an even older philosophy: Why reinvent the wheel? In today's global environment of research and development, the same

can be said of technology

In an effort to leverage global technology, the U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command opened the technological boundaries between the command and the world through its

International Technology Centers.

"The mission of the ITCs is to search for technologies currently available in overseas markets that can benefit and enhance Army capabilities," said Brig. Gen. R. Mark Brown, RDECOM deputy commanding general.

Systems of Systems Integration. "What we are doing is creating a technology marketplace external from our technology base."

In doing so, SOSI is introducing technology from non-traditional areas into the U.S. Army technology base.

"A mechanism was needed for gleaning potential science and technology opportunities from all sources outside of RDECOM," said Michael J. Dudley, director of SOSI's International, Interagency, Industrial and Academia Directorate (3IA). Dudley's 3IA directorate has the responsibility of overseeing technology center operations.

"Our mission is to help identify and leverage critical, cost-effective, technology initiatives from outside RDECOM to meet Army needs," Dudley said.

There are nine Army ITCs worldwide located in Canada, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Argentina, Japan, Australia, Singapore and Chile.

Brown said there are other locations, such as China, Russia, Brazil and others, where the possibility of discovering technology the Army could leverage is high.

"We want to go places where we

will find technology that will help maximize the research and development budgets we operate under," he said.

Currently, the centers are in the best locations to fulfill the mission, according to Lt. Col. James S. Gigrich, military deputy, 3IA.

"To achieve and support the current and future force, we must develop and evolve a robust ability to identify, acquire, and integrate critical technologies available from international sources into weapon systems," Gigrich said. "While the task is complex, the rewards are great. International armaments cooperation has the potential to significantly improve interoperability for coalition warfare, to leverage scarce program resources and to obtain the most advanced, state-of-the-art technology from the technology and industrial base."

Keeping in mind the three mission areas: the current fight, the current force and the future force, Dudley said it's vital the Army maintains a balance between the three without sacrificing one for another as it looks at available technologies.

"It's beneficial to the Army to gain and maintain access to the best

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APG hosts Disability Awareness Day events

Story and photos by

Yvonne Johnson

APG News

Dozens of Aberdeen Proving Ground Soldiers and civilians attended the Disability Awareness activities at the Edgewood Gunpowder Club Oct. 13.

The event included a self-defense workshop by officers from the APG police, displays of services offered by Harford County and private organizations, and presentations by representatives from the

Office of Personnel Management Disability Division.

Judy Matthews, co-chairperson of the APG Disability Committee, welcomed attendees and introduced the program's guest speaker, Col. John T. Wright, APG Garrison and deputy installation commander.

Noting that "some 49 million Americans are reported to have some form of disability," Wright said that "the remaining workforce, over time, will experience some level of dis-

ability, be it back problems or otherwise.

"Today, I ask that we not only think about today but about the Base Realignment and Closure, which will bring a significant amount of new employees to APG," Wright said. "With this influx, there will be a percentage that will need accommodations."

He said that as facilities are renovated to make room for the influx, "facilities must ensure that those needs, like ramps and parking spaces, are provided for."

"I call on those of you involved in organizations and committees to ensure these issues are addressed," Wright said. "We need your input."

After taking questions, Wright thanked all for coming.

"I appreciate your input today and tomorrow as we go forward," he said.

Attendees dispersed, taking in the series of discussions and events offered. A popular stop was the self-defense class offered by APG police officers John Fetzer and Chuck Grimasuckas.

Fetzer, a Jujitsu instructor, explained that they would be demonstrating "soft hand" techniques for evasive moves and counter attacks.

"Self-defense is common sense," Fetzer said, "involving basic techniques that we do instinctively."

"Having a disability doesn't have to stop you from defending yourself," Fetzer said. "All

it means is that you have another area you need to work on."

Dressed in traditional martial arts uniforms, Fetzer and Grimasuckas demonstrated several evasive and defensive techniques on a mat, and then invited attendees to participate.

"Learn to use what you have, be it a set of keys or a bobby pin," he said, "and pay attention to pressure points."

Attendees agreed they learned a lot from the presentation.

One participant, Pauline Gregory, a nurse from the Free State ChalleNGe Academy, after learning to overcome someone twice her size, said, "I just came to observe but I learned things I can actually use."

"It was an outstanding presentation," added Carlton Williams, branch chief, OPM Disability Division, after participating. "It was better to allow people to participate instead of just watching so they can be prepared to use what works for them," Williams said.

In addition to self-defense, Mike Farlow, APG community policing officer, provided an information display on theft prevention, identity theft and other crime fighting materials.

Other displays included Chesapeake Rehabilitation Equipment by Robert Stout who featured an electric scooter that can be disassembled.

"We specialize in innovative rehab solutions supporting individuals and nursing homes from Baltimore to Delaware," Stout said.

At the Upper Chesapeake hospital's health display, disability coordinator Marty Knutson demonstrated a text-to-sign-language laptop program that enables health care givers to communicate with the deaf or hard of hearing.

"The program converts text or voice to sign language and is now in use in emergency rooms," Knutson said. "This fills the gap until a qualified interpreter can get there."

In addition, representatives from Legg Mason offered information on investment management and long-term care decisions, and Tracie DeFreitas-Saab, a human factors consultant from the Job Accommodations Network, JAN, gave a presentation on accommodating those with disabilities.

"We focus on the tools we've developed and elements of disability issues," DeFreitas-Saab said.

"People can learn more at our Web site, www.jan.wvu.edu," she said.

To round out the event, Koons of Annapolis provided three vans with rear and side-entry ramps and hand controls for attendees to view.



An IBM laptop computer on the Upper Chesapeake Hospital display table shows the text-to-sign language program used by hospital emergency rooms for the deaf and hard of hearing.



Angie Barnett, from the APG Equal Employment Opportunity Office, deflects an attack by an 'aggressor' APG police officer Chuck Grimasuckas, during a Disability Awareness Day self-defense workshop at the Edgewood Gunpowder Club Oct. 13. Looking on is John Fetzer, APG police officer and Jujitsu instructor.



Carlton Williams, right, Disability Division branch chief from the Office of Personnel Management, attempts to take a gun away from his assailant, APG police officer Chuck Grimasuckas, left.

Assistance dog brings freedom, joy to persons with disabilities

Mickey Graziano

CFC Co-chairperson

Fidos For Freedom, Inc. is run by a dedicated group of volunteers who strive to improve the quality of life for people living in the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan community through the use of hearing dogs, service dogs and therapy dogs, and is Central Maryland Combined Federal Campaign 2005's charity number 3774.

The assistance dogs that are trained by Fidos volunteers will spend approximately two to three years being socialized, learning basic obedience and the specialized work that they will perform once they are matched with a client who can utilize their special talents.

"Linus brings me joy, freedom and laughter everyday in every way," said Service Dog Client Doris M. "His skill at retrieving the items I continually drop is only surpassed by his patience in bringing them to me over and over until I am able to grasp them and hold on. Having him by my side gives me the independence and courage to pursue new ventures. It is truly my privilege to be partnered with Linus."

Hearing dogs are trained to reliably alert people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing to all of the significant sounds in their environment such as the telephone, a smoke detector and an alarm clock. Service dogs are trained to aid individuals who are mobility impaired to achieve their

desire to be independent by performing tasks that are physically demanding and/or frustrating. These include retrieving dropped objects, opening doors and helping a person who has fallen to stand.

"When I remove my hearing aids to go to sleep at night, I cannot hear," said Hearing Dog Client John M. "I feel very safe with Radar by my side, knowing that he will alert me if anything unusual happens. Words cannot describe how I feel about him and what he does for me. I will be forever grateful to Fidos for making it possible for me to have him. It has changed my life."

Therapy dogs are owned by Fidos' volunteers and are specifically trained to perform quality pet therapy visits at local healthcare facilities. Therapy dogs provide unconditional love to residents of nursing homes or patients in local hospitals. These very special, well-mannered and obedient dogs provide emotional and physical benefits to many people in the community who miss their own pets.

Fidos DEAR (Dogs Educating & Assisting Readers) Literacy Program is a new venture by Fidos For Freedom, Inc. that is taking place in local schools and libraries. The DEAR Program improves reading skills of elementary school students by encouraging them to read one-on-one with a Fidos Therapy Dog in a relaxed learning environment.

Photo by U.S. ARMY

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